



The Fountain

Winter 2003 Volume 6 Issue 2



Quarterly Newsletter of The City Of Detroit
Historic Designation Advisory Board and Historic District Commission



Happy New Year!

Looking back, 2002 has been a very productive year for the City of Detroit's historic preservation agencies. The Historic District Commission reviewed 329 permit applications for work in historic districts and approximately 100 state tax credit declarations. Its Section 106 consultant reviewed 2,845 federal undertakings. The Historic Designation Advisory Board studied eight districts for local designation and reviewed six national register nominations under the Certified Local Government program. We anticipate another busy year in 2003!

About Town: Historic Miller Middle School at 2322 Dubois, significant for its association with the educational uplift of Detroit's black community since 1932, will be featured in a documentary that will be shown in February on Detroit's government access cable Channel 10. Students, parents, and Miller alumni have done the impossible as they continue their commitment to improving the community.

NEW! *A.I.A. Detroit the American Institute of Architects Guide to Detroit Architecture* by Eric J. Hill, FAIA, and John Gallagher. Published in memory of Gordon Bugbee, AIA, a former member of the Historic Designation Advisory Board, the book is available through area booksellers and its publisher, Wayne State University Press.



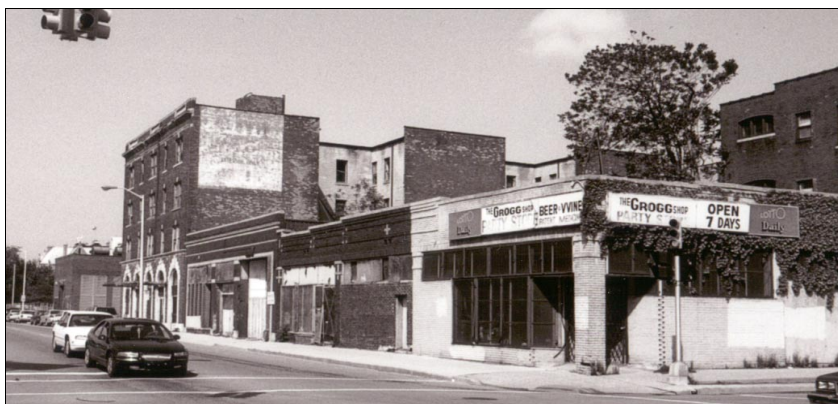
BLACK HISTORY MONTH:

SUGAR HILL

You've heard about Paradise Valley, but Sugar Hill? In its heyday, Paradise Valley was Detroit's center of African American commerce by day and entertainment by night. No remnants of Paradise Valley are left today; they were recently replaced by Ford Field. Sugar Hill is holding on, though.

In the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, because urban renewal led to large scale displacement of African Americans on the near east side, the community moved northward. The area now occupied largely by the Detroit Medical Center became a vibrant entertainment district featuring jazz music. A patchwork collection of buildings is all that is left of this area, loosely referred to as Sugar Hill.

Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in January 2003, the Sugar Hill Historic District is located between Woodward Avenue and John R. on the west and east, and East Forest and East Canfield on the north and south. It is soon to see a rebirth through building rehabilitation and new infill housing. N'namdi Art Gallery, the offices of Zachary & Associates, Inc., Planning & Economic Development Specialist, and the recycled Garfield Building loft apartments are leading the way towards the revitalization of Sugar Hill.



87-89, 99, 109, 113-117 E. Canfield, corner of E. Canfield and John R.

Under Study:



The Detroit City Council has directed the Historic Designation Advisory Board to study the following proposal for local designation. Preliminary reports are available to the public.

Washington Boulevard Local Historic District

The proposed Washington Boulevard Local Historic District includes eleven buildings on Washington Boulevard between Michigan Avenue and Clifford Street in downtown Detroit. Anchored on the southeast corner by one of Detroit's best loved buildings—the Book Cadillac Hotel, the Boulevard is lined with other significant buildings that were designed by some of Detroit's most important architects—Albert Kahn, Louis Kamper, Donaldson & Meier—in a range of architectural styles popular from 1900 to 1930, including Chicago Style, Beaux-Arts, Italian Romanesque and Art Deco. All of the buildings are commercial, with the exception of St. Aloysius Church and its adjacent office structure.

Before it became a commercial thoroughfare, Washington Boulevard, one of the “grand boulevards” laid out in



Washington Boulevard c. 1927
Photo from Library of Congress,
Prints and Photographs Division,
Detroit Publishing Company Collection

the Woodward Plan of 1807, was developed as an upper class residential area. Amongst its residents was J. Burgess Book, Jr., scion of one of Detroit's wealthiest families. He dreamt of transforming the street into Detroit's most exclusive shopping district reminiscent of grand boulevards in Europe. New commercial structures had already begun to replace old houses and businesses before Book retained the architect Louis Kamper to carry out his scheme, resulting in the architectural diversity we see today.

Kamper designed five buildings for Book, all in the Beaux-Arts style. He also configured the broad boulevard with its stone balustrades, formal promenades, statuary and attractive street lights. Book's creation was destroyed by the installation of the present street configuration with its light and water sculptures in 1978-79.



Mark your calendars for the 2003 Michigan Preservation Conference, **April 24-26, 2003**. "The Politics of Preservation - Preservation and Public Policy" will be held in Kalamazoo. Call 517-371-8080 for more information.

Visit the National Park Service's new information program, *Working on the Past in Local Historic Districts*. Developed especially for historic property owners, new district commissions, community officials, and design professionals, it is easy to navigate to topic areas to find what you are looking for. The web site address is:

www2.cr.nps.gov/workingonthepast

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Tri-UMPH Awards - Call for Nominations

The Tri-UMPHs are prestigious awards given to those who have worked on historic preservation and neighborhood conservation projects with the assistance of the city's historic preservation staff. We are once again accepting nominations for the 2003 tri-UMPH Awards in the following categories:

Community
Historic Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse

Government/Institution
New Construction/Infill

Please submit your nominations in any or all of the four categories to the Historic Designation Advisory Board offices by **March 15, 2003**. Include the name of nominee, contact person (name, address and phone number), a description of the mission and accomplishments of the individual, group or institution you are nominating, and a description of the project/activity. Nominations will be judged by a committee of Advisory Board and Commission members and staff. Tri-UMPH Awards will be presented during a special ceremony during Preservation Week in May. Read about the winners in the Spring 2003 issue of *The Fountain*.

Dear Dr. Oldhouse,

Over the past few years, I've noticed that the top of my cement porch has started to flake off and it seems to be getting worse. What is this from and how can I fix it?

- P. Cochere

Dear P. Cochere,

What you have described is a common occurrence in colder climates like Michigan, usually caused by using salt to de-ice our walkways, driveways and porches. By absorbing moisture salt actually lowers the temperature at which water freezes; thus, the snow will not bond to the pavement, melt and then refreeze to form ice. While salt is an effective and inexpensive de-icer, it can cause significant amounts of damage to plants and masonry.

Since salt absorbs moisture it robs water from nearby plants, causing the plant to turn yellow or brown. Using a little fertilizer near grass and plants instead will de-ice the surface and also nourish your landscaping. Sweeping up and discarding excess de-icing material will lower possible runoff onto the lawn.

Masonry, such as the cement porch, driveway or the brick on a house, will absorb moisture as well. The water can often evaporate but any salt in the water gets trapped in the masonry and cannot escape. This can cause a white blush on the surface called efflorescence. Over the course of many seasons and applications of salt, this can become a cause of spalling, a process in which the outer layer of the brick or masonry flakes off. Masonry has to be replaced, not just repaired, when spalling occurs, but you can take measures to prevent or slow down the corrosion process.

Preventive solutions to ice forming:

- Remove snow before applying de-icer; use it sparingly in strategic locations.
 - Let snow melt naturally if weather is expected to warm.
 - Use small salt granules, which dissolve easier than large granules.
 - Mix a little salt with sand, sawdust or kitty litter instead of using pure salt.
 - Sweep salt and salt mixture away from your house's foundations.
 - Beware of dry or liquid products with a lot of Potassium Chloride (KCl), or Calcium Chloride (MgCl); they are toxic and will corrode masonry and metal.
 - Magnesium Chloride (MgCl) and Calcium Magnesium Acetate, called CMA, or any organic de-icer are safer for plants and masonry, but may cost more than salt.
- Don't forget to remove your shoes when you go inside so the de-icer won't track into your house.



Ask Dr. Oldhouse



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Historic Designation Advisory Board
204 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick



Detroit City Council
Maryann Mahaffey, *President*
Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr., *President Pro Tem*
Alonzo W. Bates
Sheila M. Cockrel
Barbara - Rose Collins
Kay Everett
Sharon McPhail
Alberta Tinsley-Talabi

Jackie L. Currie, *City Clerk*

Important Dates To Remember

Historic Designation Advisory Board

Russell L. Baltimore

Melanie A. Bazil

De Witt Dykes

Michael Farrell

Dr. Lucille Cruz Gajec

Marie M. Gardner

Calvin Jackson

Harriet Johnson

Florence LaRose

Marsha Bruhn,
Director, CPC
Ex Officio

Walter Watkins, Jr.
Chief Development Officer
Ex-Officio

Dr. Dennis Zembala,
Director, DHS
Ex-Officio

Historic Designation Advisory Board Meeting Dates

The Advisory Board usually meets on the second Thursday of each month in the afternoon. Meetings are open to the public; a call to the HDAB office can confirm date and time.

Historic District Commission

Meeting Dates

Wednesday, February 12
Wednesday, March 12
Wednesday, April 9
Wednesday, May 14

Application Deadlines

Monday, January 27
Monday, February 24
Monday, March 24
Monday, April 28

All Commission meetings are held in the Committee of the Whole Room, 13th floor, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center beginning at 5:30 PM. Applications must be received in the Commission office at 65 Cadillac Square, Suite 1300, by 5PM on the due date.

Historic District Commission

Patricia Linklater,
Chair

Devan Anderson,
Vice Chair

Arletta Douglas

Rainy Hamilton Jr.

Renee McDuffee

Rita Ross

James Turner